A REVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES TODAY AND SOME QUESTIONS FOR TOMORROW*

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I

I SHOULD like to begin by expressing my deep appreciation of the honour you have done me by inviting me to address you. I must confess that the invitation greatly surprised me. I have no personal or first-hand knowledge of the Jewish communities in continental Europe and I felt very doubtful whether I could usefully undertake the task of addressing a body such as this, consisting as it does of leading individuals actively engaged in dealing with the problems confronting these communities, and far more capable than I can possibly hope to be of reviewing their present situation or their hopes for the future.

However, though with misgiving, I did accept your invitation. My main reason for doing so was that twice on previous occasions I attempted to give a broad review of the situation of the Jewish people, namely, in a lecture I gave at the London School of Economics in 1942[1] and in the Barou Lecture I gave for the World Jewish Congress in 1956.[2] I felt that these earlier reports would provide me with a basis for comparison and perhaps enable me to offer some suggestions towards an analysis of the present situation.

Before entering on this analysis I should like at the outset to say that the impression I have gathered by comparing the picture of Western Jewry as seen by observers in the early fifties with the picture today is that European Jews have proved far more resilient and resourceful than was generally expected, even though they would not have been able to achieve as much as they have done without aid from outside. The extent of this aid is impressive and beyond all praise. In his unpublished report presented to the Assembly in 1962 Mr. Jordan drew an analogy between the part played by the Marshall Plan in the recovery of Europe generally and the help given to European Jews by such bodies

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as the A.J.D.C. and the Claims Conference, and he gave it as his opinion that, like the European countries in general, the European Jewish communities had reached a point where they are much better able to stand on their own feet. He went on to bring out some of the implications of this state of affairs for the future policy of the A.J.D.C. and for that of the European communities, bearing in mind the urgent need for help in areas outside Western Europe. On this I will express no opinion, but it is clear from the way in which his remarks were received by the Assembly that Western European Jews have by now sufficiently recovered to be able not only to help themselves but also to help others. The vitality of the Jewries of Western Europe is further evidenced by the coming into being of the Standing Conference and by the widely representative character it is rapidly assuming.

In turning to my main theme, I should like to refer briefly to my earlier surveys. In 1942 I dealt mainly with the situation in Soviet Russia, in the countries I labelled 'étatiste', in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and in Nazi Germany. In Soviet Russia the revolutionary transformation of the entire social and economic structure had resulted by 1940 in a vast displacement of the Jews, both economic and local, on a scale hitherto unparalleled. In Germany the Nazis were steadily pursuing their policy of physical extermination. In Poland and other 'étatiste' countries the view was gaining ground before the war that the Jewish problem could only be solved by eliminating Jews from the positions they had for long been holding in commerce, the handicrafts, and the liberal professions. By 1942 it was clear that whatever the outcome of the war, those Jews who survived the Nazi policy of extermination could not hope for an automatic restoration of anything like their former position.

In my second lecture I attempted to review the situation as reported by observers ten years after the war. As far as Soviet Russia is concerned it was clear that the earlier hopes that the Jews might benefit from the general policy of allowing a measure of independence to national or cultural minorities were not to be fulfilled. Distinctively Jewish cultural activities and institutions were disappearing, though it was not clear to what extent the decay was due to excessive zeal on the part of the Jewish communists, to general lack of interest or apathy on the part of the new generation, or to high policy from above.

In the satellite countries much the same pattern could be discerned everywhere. The old institutions lay in ruins and those who tried to bring them back to life had to face the vagaries of Communist policy and the feeling of insecurity and apathy of the survivors. The larger communities had been almost completely destroyed, with the exception of Rumania and Hungary where considerable numbers remained. In all cases the remnants were cut off from the mainstream of Jewish life.

In Germany the survey made by the Federal Government in 1955

showed that at that time 27,000 Jews lived in Germany and that of these 18,000 were of German origin and the rest displaced persons from Eastern Europe. The survivors were making strenuous efforts to build up new institutions, but the small size of the communities and the age structure made observers doubt whether the Jewish communities would prove viable. In Austria the outlook was no brighter.

In Holland the demographic survey made in 1954 gives a Jewish population of 27,000 (as compared with about 140,000 in 1942). By 1955 the general impression was that the Jewish communities in Holland had shown great ability in reorganizing their institutions along modern lines and that there was a lively interest in the revival of Judaism and of the Jewish people.

In Belgium the Jewish population in 1955 was probably about 30,000 compared with a pre-war figure variously estimated as 65,000–90,000. The process of rehabilitation met with great difficulties, but by 1952 the situation had greatly improved and there was less dependence on outside aid. Observers noted an intense and active Jewish life, not to be measured by the numbers affiliated to synagogues. As in Holland, the influence of Israel was making itself felt in the sphere of education and more generally in keeping alive the sense of Jewish solidarity.

In France and in Italy the losses in population had not been so great as elsewhere, and by 1955 the communal situation had been largely restored. In both countries, however, observers noted a strengthening of the old forces making for assimilation particularly in the younger age-groups.

II

Coming now to the situation at present, we must begin by noting the following facts:

(1) The proportion of European Jews in the total Jewish population has been reduced from about a percentage of 58 in 1939 to some 30 today, or in absolute figures from 9·5 million to about 4 million. The figures for Europe would have been lower were it not for the recent influx into France of Jews from North Africa.[3]

(2) Of the four million estimated as living in Europe, about two and a half million are in the Soviet Union. The objective conditions as shaped by the dominant policy and more particularly the absence of facilities for Jewish education make survival or revival increasingly difficult. There are signs that the attitude of Jewish intellectuals towards the problem of Jewish identity is undergoing a change, but we have no reliable means of ascertaining how widespread or effective this change is, or whether in the younger generation generally there is an active desire for the survival of Russian Jewry as a distinctive community.[4]

(3) Large-scale movements of European Jews overseas have by now

almost ceased. In some of the satellite countries the numbers have been reduced to those who for one reason or another have decided to stay on. The two largest aggregations are in Hungary where there is an estimated Jewish population of about 75,000 to 80,000 as compared with 400,000 in 1933, and Rumania with an estimated population in 1962 of about 150,000 to 160,000 as compared with 850,000 in 1933. Probably, if restrictions were removed emigration to Israel and elsewhere would be resumed in varying measure from these countries.

(4) In Western Europe the two largest aggregations are in Great Britain and France. The Jewish population in Great Britain is approximately 450,000, including some 60,000 who came from Central Europe impelled by Nazi persecution. In France there are now about 500,000 Jews, including those who came recently from North Africa and from Egypt and Eastern Europe. What happens to these communities is of importance not only to themselves but to the rest of Jewry owing to the significant part they have played and continue to play in the field of international Jewish relations.

(5) This brings me to a point of fundamental importance. In considering particular Jewish communities we must not forget the essential unity of the Jewish people. This unity is due not only to the fact that Jews in different parts of the world are aware of each other and have a sense of solidarity, but to the objective interdependence of the different communities which does not depend entirely on their own volition. I like to think in this connexion of the image used by Condorcet in describing the development of mankind. He adopted the 'happy artifice', as Comte calls it, of treating the successive peoples who pass on the torch as if they were a single people running the race. The image seems to me more appropriate in its application to the Jewish people. For in the course of centuries different centres have arisen which for a time played a predominant role and then passed on the leadership to others. Thus, as Dubnow has shown, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century the Jews in Arab and Christian Spain were in the lead. At the same time the Jews in Southern and later Northern France grew in influence (thirteenth–fifteenth century). Coming to more modern times, Germany and Poland shared the leadership in the sixteenth–eighteenth century. Then at the end of the eighteenth century under the impact of the enlightenment two new centres arose, Germany in the West and Russian Jewry in the East. In more recent times two more centres of immense vitality and importance have arisen, American Jewry and Israel.

In assessing the present situation and future prospects of European Jewry it is necessary to consider the nature of the influence exerted by the three centres last mentioned. First, there can be no doubt that during the nineteenth and the first third of the twentieth century the eastern wing of the Jewish people was the main source of Jewish

creativeness and vitality. But the circumstances in which Jewish culture developed in these areas were peculiar. In Czarist Russia the Jews lived on the whole in areas which, though under the political domination of the Russians, were not Russian in culture, e.g. Poland, Lithuania, and White Russia. From Great Russia the Jews were excluded and thus deprived of any widespread contact with the politically dominant power. On the other hand, the culture of the other subject populations was not on the whole likely to attract the Jews and appears to have had little influence on them. Furthermore, in areas of mixed nationalities the various cultures struggled with and weakened each other. In short, the divorce of culture and political power, the conflict of cultures in the areas of Jewish settlement and the conditions of economic life favoured and indeed necessitated a self-contained Jewish life. In these centres there developed a distinctive Jewish culture of astonishing energy and vitality. We have it on the authority of Professor Baron that 'On balance future historians are likely to call the first third of the twentieth century the golden age of Ashkenazi Jews in Europe.' [5] The conditions in which this culture arose are not likely to be repeated anywhere else. In any event, the communities in which it flourished have been destroyed by the Nazi massacres, the transformations due to the Russian Revolution, and the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As far as the rest of the world is concerned, this source of recruitment is for the time being exhausted. On the other hand, the extensive migrations before the war and the resettlement of millions that have survived the Nazi holocaust have produced two new centres, namely, those of North America and of Israel. What we have now to consider is their impact on the European Diaspora.

As far as Israel is concerned it has of course itself to solve the problem of welding together immigrants derived from all parts of the world and from communities differing widely in cultural level. How far this can be done by discovering and developing the elements common to them all, or whether in the process one or the other of the types of Jewish culture will gain predominance and what form the emerging culture will take, no one can yet foresee. Meanwhile, the influence of Israel on Diaspora Jewry is already clearly to be discerned. This influence is important mainly, as it seems to me, in two ways. First of all, the astonishing revival of Hebrew as a spoken tongue is beginning to transform the character of Jewish education in the Diaspora, and if this continues it will give new vitality to the ideal of Israel as the spiritual centre of the whole Jewish people. Second, the Zionist movement and the remarkable achievements of Israel, culturally, politically and economically, has led to a revival of interest in Jewish history and culture not confined to, and often independent of, interest in Judaism as a religion. This is of the greatest significance for those Jews who have only slight or no connexions with religious institutions and to whom

religion as such makes no appeal. This impact of Israel together with the heart-searching produced by the Nazi calamities has brought back to the fold many of the younger generation who otherwise would have yielded to the forces making for assimilation.

As to American Jewry, I need not, in speaking to this conference, dwell long on the part it played in the work of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Consider the share of American Jewish organizations in the transportation to Israel of about half a million Jews in the period from 1945 to 1953; the enormous sums they contributed to the work of relief and the reconstruction of religious and cultural institutions not only in Europe but in Moslem countries, the skill and energy which they have shown in helping the devastated communities to start life again and to provide a solid framework for further development. It is not too much to say that without this prompt and massive aid in money and personnel many of the Jewish communities in continental Europe would not have been reconstituted or would have remained in a state of disorganization so long that not much would have been left to save.

That all this was possible points to the existence of a reservoir of energy and vitality in American Jewry which is of great significance for world Jewry as a whole. This impression is strengthened by the revival of Jewish studies in America and the important and lively discussion of the problems relating to Jewish education. If much of this is due to the inspiration of recent European or European-trained immigrants, it nevertheless has a vitality and momentum of its own and may, in turn, exert important influence on the institutional and cultural development of European Jewry.

In considering the various Jewish communities in continental Europe the classification I adopted in my earlier reports is no longer appropriate. The main division is between communities in Communist areas and those in non-Communist ones, and into those that had suffered crippling losses of population and those in which substantial numbers remained. In Communist areas Jewish survival depends mainly on the outcome of two fundamental changes in the general situation. The first is the break-up of the old established institutions, the need to begin anew under completely altered conditions and the change in the economic position of the Jews which formerly acted as a separating or isolating factor. The second is the persistent attacks on religious beliefs and institutions and the rise of what in many ways is a new religion which for the first time may serve to unite Jews with others rather than keep them apart. Whether Communism is properly described as a religion or not, it resembles other religions in that it has a mythology, a ritual and, unfortunately, a claim that apart from it there is no salvation. In these circumstances, the question arises whether, particularly in the case of the numerically small communities, the Jews can withstand the forces making for absorption and assimilation. In different

forms these are the difficulties which the Jewries in Soviet Russia, Poland, Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia have to face. Are there any possibilities of a revival of religion, or can appeal be made to other spiritual forces strong enough to sustain a distinctively Jewish way of life?

In Western Jewish communities essentially similar problems arise though in different forms. There too economic changes and particularly the growth of the 'middle classes', especially the numbers engaged in administration, distribution, and the technical services, have tended to break down or greatly reduce the peculiarities of Jewish occupational stratification. In Western societies too the question arises, though not so acutely as in the Communist society, whether the Jews can survive as a distinctive cultural community, and not merely as a religious community, in face of the forces making for assimilation. Can there, in short, be a distinctive Jewish culture in these areas and what precisely is its content? To what extent are the Jewish cultural and social institutions dependent upon or, as some would say, 'parasitic' upon religious institutions, and can they survive the increasing secularization of life?

III

In dealing with these problems as they arise in different communities account would have to be taken of the following factors:

(1) Size of the Jewish population, age and sex distribution, fertility and mortality.
(2) Local distribution, particularly concentration in large urban centres or tendencies towards dispersal.
(3) Occupational stratification.
(4) The composition of the community as shaped by emigration and immigration in different periods.
(5) Level of the environing culture and the extent of cultural pluralism in both the non-Jewish and Jewish populations.

Information on all these points is very incomplete and the evaluation of what there is presents great difficulties. Here I have to confine myself to a brief review of a few communities to illustrate this method of approach. To this end I have selected Germany and Belgium from among the smaller communities and France from the larger ones.

(*a*) *Germany.* The total population is now 25,000. About two-thirds are in the larger towns and there are only eight communities containing more than 500 members. The rest are widely dispersed mostly in communities of 500 to 30 members. Broadly, the German Jewish community contains three strata: firstly, Jews who before the Hitler calamities were highly 'Germanized'; secondly, German Jews who, having left Germany, have come back; and thirdly, a portion which consists of former

displaced persons of Eastern European origin. The communities that have been reconstituted are new formations not really continuous with the older Jewish communities as they had developed in the course of several centuries. The leaders of the German Jews feel that these diverse elements should be welded into one community irrespective of differences of origin and they are making strenuous efforts towards this end. But what is to be the basis of unity? True, they are still united by the memories of their common suffering under the Nazis. But this is hardly an enduring factor. The old designation *deutsche Staatsbuerger juedischen Glaubens* is clearly inappropriate, since it seems that more than a third of the Jews in Germany are not German citizens. They are in short not German Jews but Jews in Germany. There is a feeling, sharpened during the Nazi period, which still survives that Jews are different from or other than Germans. In the view of the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* the Jewish population is likely to decline owing to the low birth-rate and the large proportion of the aged. Further immigration is not now expected. These facts taken together with the high proportion of mixed marriages augur ill for the biological viability of the Jews in Germany. Can religion serve as a uniting factor? There are obstacles due to internal divisions. The majority in whose lives religion still plays a part are 'liberal minded'. The Rabbis on the other hand are, with few exceptions, conservative. Here is a source of divergence of particular importance in its bearing on the younger generation. The *Zentralrat* refer in this connexion to the great importance of assuring an adequate supply of trained teachers and they mention the effort they are making to co-ordinate the work of teachers in the light of a common programme and common principles. It is clear that the Jews in Germany are aware of the dangers of disintegration, and in this there is an element of hope which may yet disprove the gloomy prognostications based on statistical calculations of biological viability.[6]

(*b*) In *Belgium* the importance of the factors I have enumerated as relevant to survival is clearly to be discerned. The Jewish population is estimated as 35,000–40,000 and is concentrated mainly in Brussels and Antwerp. The composition of the population is complex. The older families who originally came from the Netherlands, France, Hungary, and Germany have all but disappeared. The vast majority derive from the East European migration after 1880 and more recently from Germany. The age distribution shows the characteristics found in other communities devastated by the Nazis and by migration, the proportion of the aged being higher and that of the younger generation lower than in the general population. As to occupational stratification, the majority of Jews in Antwerp are still engaged in the industry and commerce of diamonds; while in Brussels occupations are more diversified and the peculiarities of the Jewish economic structure not so marked. There are striking differences between the Jewish communities in Antwerp and

Brussels. The percentage of affiliation with synagogues is 54 in the former and 18 in Brussels. The proportion of children receiving Jewish instruction is nearly 80 per cent in Antwerp as compared with about 22·6 in Brussels and 34 per cent for the whole of Belgium. Mixed marriages are said to be common in Brussels, but almost unknown in Antwerp. It would be interesting to inquire what effects the linguistic and cultural divisions in Belgium have upon the forces making for assimilation as compared, say, with the impact of the more unitary French culture on the Jews in France. Is what has been called 'a third generation' coming into being which takes its Jewishness for granted and is free alike from the excessive self-effacement or the exaggerated self-assertion characteristic of groups unsure of themselves? In any event, observers of Belgian Jewry all agree that there is an intense and active Jewish life and that strenuous efforts are being made to assure greater cohesion within and between the various communities. Here as elsewhere it is difficult to estimate the relative strength of the religious factor as compared with that due to the broader cultural influence of Zionism and the creation of the State of Israel. In an article in *L'Arche*, March 1962, Mr. Joseph Lehrer concludes his interesting analysis with the question 'Who and What are the Belgian Jews? Is there such a thing as Belgian Judaism?' He leaves the question open, but his own account points to many signs of growth and development.

(*c*) *France.* As I have already mentioned, the number of Jews living in France in 1955 was about 300,000 compared with about 320,000 in 1940. M. Georges Levitte, writing in 1960,[7] gave it as his opinion that though the Second World War had changed the geographical distribution, the relative proportion of the different origin groups remained largely the same apart from the influx of some 40,000 Jews from North Africa. This seems to require further investigation. Since about one-third of the pre-war population were annihilated by the Germans, the gap must have been filled by immigrants and probably only to a small extent by natural increase. It is worth noting that in contrast with what happened in Britain, the post-war immigrants to France were mostly of East European origin. In any event the demographic situation has by now been transformed by the arrival of large numbers from Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria, and to a smaller extent from Hungary and Egypt. The total Jewish population is now estimated to be 500,000 and is thus larger than the estimated Jewish population in Britain. The largest communities are still in the Paris region but there are several large aggregations in other areas, and in the Midi communities which had disappeared are now coming to life again. Some 30,000 however seem to live in widely scattered small communities.

On the economic side the widening of the range of occupations continues. The younger generations are turning increasingly not only to

the liberal professions but also to technical and administrative positions in the new industries. The drift is thus towards the middle classes and away from the working classes, though, of course, the North African influx has brought in a new working-class element. According to Rabi 61 per cent of them are workers and 28 per cent employees.[8]

Demographically therefore French Jewry faces a new situation. The hope has been expressed that the newcomers will give French Jewry a fresh opportunity for spiritual revival. Thus in his address as President of the F.S.J.U. in 1960, M. Guy de Rothschild urged French Jews to come to the aid of the refugees, 'D'abord et peut-être avant tout parce que les réfugiés sont le renouvellement du judaïsme français.' M. Robert Sommer is quoted as having expressed a similar opinion: 'Les Juifs d'Afrique constituent pour le judaïsme français sa *dernière chance*. Il ne viendra, hélas, plus personne de Varsovie ou de Salonique.' [9]

It will be noted that there is a lack of assurance in the expression of these hopes. The hesitation is, no doubt, due to the important differences in the character of the new immigration compared with the previous waves of migration from Eastern Europe. Firstly, the East European Jews tended to concentrate in a few urban centres and economically to be confined to specific occupations. To these isolating factors must be added the language barrier, since most of them spoke Yiddish. Furthermore, they brought with them a number of active associations and a sustained interest in the rich and varied forms of Jewish culture that had developed in Eastern Europe. None of these factors is present in the recent immigration. The newcomers are more widely dispersed both locally and economically. There is no language barrier and, aside from traditional Judaism, it is doubtful whether they have the cultural vitality of the East European Jews. Everything, therefore, depends on the strength of their attachment to the forms of Judaism which they have made their own, on the possibility of a synthesis between their Judaism and that of other Jews in France, and above all on their power in the new conditions of resisting the all-pervasive forces making for cultural assimilation. Professor A. Neher, writing in *L'Arche*, August/September 1960, sees in the arrival of North African Jews the possibility of a 'spiritual and social symbiosis' of Ashkenazim and Sephardim. But it is not clear whether he is voicing a hope or describing an identifiable trend in the development of French Jewry.

On the whole, the picture of French Jewry today is far more encouraging than that given by observers of the scene in 1955. M. Rabi says he has written an 'anatomy not an autopsy'; M. Georges Levitte tells us that in his view French Jewry has largely passed out of its dismal period into a period of reconstruction. Writing in 1955 M. Arnold Mandel, analysing the organizational side of French Jewry, was rather

pessimistic. Among other disturbing factors he asserted that 'The *Consistoire* was an administrative religious body without an ideology, and that its influence was on the decline'. The situation now is very different. Though the number of its adherents is still small (about 12,000 for the whole of France, representing about 50,000 persons, according to Rabi),[10] the *Consistoire* has greatly expanded its activities, has made strenuous efforts to extend and improve religious education, to establish closer contacts with other organizations, and to welcome and integrate into French life the recent refugees from North Africa and Egypt. Furthermore, the direction is no longer confined to the older French Jewish families, though these still play a leading part in it. All this reveals a reservoir of vitality concealed from the eyes of observers in the early fifties. Additional evidence of this vitality is provided by the work of the *Fonds Social Juif Unifié* established in 1950 and greatly helped in its development by the JOINT. Though it met with difficulties at first is has now succeeded in bringing together many groups and movements and is steadily extending its activities not only in welfare work but also in the field of education and other cultural services.

In taking stock of the situation the following points are relevant. I state them with a good deal of hesitation as I have no first-hand knowledge of the conditions in France and can only give the impression I have gathered from such reports as I have been able to study.

(1) Judged by the extent of Jewish education the proportion of Jews in France taking an active interest in Judaism is small. Hardly more than 25 per cent of children of school age get even the elements of a Jewish education.

(2) In the past the tendency to cultural assimilation in France was to some extent held in check by waves of immigration from areas with a more intense form of Jewish life. As far as Eastern Europe is concerned, this source of vitality is dried up. Furthermore the evidence suggests that the Jews of Eastern European origin now yield more rapidly to the 'assimilative genius' of French culture than formerly. They tend to melt directly into French life instead of passing through the intermediate stage of identifying themselves with the French Jews. The recent Algerian immigration, as we have seen, may exercise an important religious influence, but whether their type of Judaism can be fused with other forms of religious life remains to be seen.

(3) As I have indicated above, there have been important changes in the local distribution of Jews and in their place in the economic system. The Jews still live mainly in large urban centres, but it seems that as a rule they are no longer concentrated in particular districts. Whether there are active communal centres in the new districts or suburbs as is the case in the U.S.A. and whether, where these centres exist, they can continue to exert an enduring influence on the rising generation must remain in doubt. Economically too, as we have seen, the concentration

in particular industries is not so marked as formerly and is ceasing to act as an isolating factor.

(4) On the other hand, owing to the impact of Israel and perhaps also to a widefelt need for reappraisal induced by the calamities of our age, there has been a rebirth of Jewish awareness in France. This can be seen in the efforts to improve the quality of Jewish education, and to unify the organizational framework of the communities, and above all in the growth of a 'third generation mentality' among many in the younger generation who seem no longer to feel the need of concealing their Jewish identity. The self-questioning by Jewish intellectuals tends to be expressed in the language for the time being fashionable among philosophers. An example is the recent book by Robert Mizrahi entitled *La condition réflexive de l'homme juif* which adopts methods of analysis used by existentialist philosophers. How important such efforts are depends on the importance of the philosophy with which they try to come to terms. In any event, however, they provide evidence of spiritual disquiet and an eagerness to find a reasoned basis for the belief in the unity and continuity of the Jewish people. The conceptions offered are, I fear, very hazy. But the difficulties encountered are not peculiar to Jews in France. They are common to all Jewish communities in Western countries.

IV

I will end with a few concluding remarks. European Jewry like American Jewry is anything but moribund. It is everywhere displaying an energy and resourcefulness unsuspected even a few years ago. Nevertheless it is not to be denied that the situation of Jews in the Diaspora has been fundamentally changed by the destruction or decimation of the Jewries in Eastern and Central Europe. Nothing can make up for these losses. Yet if millions have died, their contributions to Judaism have not died with them. The work of Jewish scholars in Eastern Europe, in Germany and in France is now leading to a renaissance of Judaic studies not only in Israel but in Europe and America. It has to be remembered too that it is from Eastern and Western Europe that the pioneers of Zionism were drawn and that it was the mental outlook generated there in the nineteenth and twentieth century that to a large extent shaped the social and cultural character of the Yishuv. Israel is now repaying its debt by the contribution it is making towards the revival and reconstruction of European Jewry. Its influence, as we have seen, is making itself felt in various directions. Firstly, it is intensifying the sense of interdependence among Jews all over the world. Secondly, it is encouraging the hope that Hebrew may come to serve as a common medium in uniting the Jewish communities in all countries with one another and with Israel. Thirdly, it has stimulated inquiry into the

content and purpose of a Jewish education under the conditions of modern life. It may be that the kind of synthesis of Western and Jewish culture towards which the Jews of Eastern Europe were struggling is not one that can be fruitfully pursued in the totally different conditions of Western Europe or America. But whatever new synthesis is attempted is bound to be influenced by the new forms of life emerging in Israel.

The importance of education as a key factor is widely recognized by all those engaged in the work of rehabilitation and reconstruction. In particular great stress is laid on the need to provide a Jewish education not only for children of school age but to revive the old Jewish tradition of education for adults. The reports published by the JOINT and other agencies show what has been achieved and what may reasonably be hoped for. Yet in all these accounts one cannot fail to note a persistent uneasiness. There is a similar malaise in the discussion of the aims and purposes of Jewish education in the U.S.A. It is never quite clear, we are told, what ideal is being aimed at. 'Everybody agrees', says Mr. Eugene E. Borowitz in his essay on 'The problems facing Jewish educational philosophy',[11] 'that the American Jew exemplifies a new form of Jewish living. But is there anything in American Judaism which is both authentic to the Jewish past and integrated in the American present? The absence of a consistent answer is a persistent source of guilt and apprehension among parents and educators.' Perhaps 'guilt and apprehension' are terms too strong to express the widely prevalent ambivalent attitude to Jewish education. In any event, it is clear that in Continental Europe Jewish education reaches only a small proportion, 25 per cent or less of those concerned, and that generally it does not succeed in giving much to those whom it does reach. On the religious side the problem is not confined to Jews. The churches too complain of the failure of religious instruction in schools to attain its proper objects. But in the case of Jewish education we are concerned not only with religion but also with the broader aspects of Jewish culture. The question then arises whether there can be such a thing as a specifically Jewish culture in countries of high cultural level and, if so, what is its content and by what methods can it be further developed and transmitted to future generations. Clearly the question of education cannot be discussed in a vacuum. It raises once more the problem of the relations of the various elements within the community to one another and to the wider culture of which it is a part. Above all it calls for a re-interpretation of what Judaism stands for, or ought to stand for, in the modern world.

NOTES

[1] 'The Jewish Problem', *Agenda*, Oct. 1942; reprinted in World Jewish Congress *Reports* No. 4, Feb. 1943.

[2] 'The Jewish People Today', Noah Barou Memorial Lecture, 1956.

[3] See *The Jewish Communities of the World*, 1963, Institute of Jewish Affairs, p. 5.

[4] Cf. *Jews in Eastern Europe*, Vol. II, No. I, Dec. 1962, pp. 41–50.

[5] *American Jewish Year Book*, 1962, p. 34.

[6] Cf. *Juden in Deutschland*, 1962, published by the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland, and *Ueber den Wiederaufbau der juedischen Gemeinden in Deutschland seit 1945*, 1961, by Harry Maór.

[7] 'Impressions of French Jewry Today', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. II, no. 2.

[8] *Anatomie du judaïsme français*, 1962, p. 315, quoting A. Moles in *L'Arche*, Oct. 1961.

[9] Rabi, p. 150.

[10] Op. cit., p. 156.

[11] *American Jewish Yearbook*, 1961, p. 150.

CHRONICLE

3,923 Jews were enumerated in the 1956 New Zealand census, the largest communities being in the provinces of Auckland and Wellington. *The Jewish Year Book*, 1964, estimates that recent immigrants from Great Britain, Holland, and Hungary have raised this number to approximately 5,000. New Zealand Jewry is eager to welcome more immigrants from Britain, and the Wellington Jewish Welfare and Relief Society has advertised in the Jewish Press of Britain, offering to sponsor British Jews who wish to settle in New Zealand.

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Belgian law requires the unemployed to register daily, except on Sundays, to qualify for unemployment benefits. This rule obviously handicapped Sabbath observers, and, as a result of an appeal to the National Employment Office, orthodox Jews may now register on Sundays.

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Lyons, in France, had a Jewish population of less than 10,000 before 1961. After the Algerian Declaration of Independence, 25,000 North African Jews came to the city to settle, and a Jewish primary school was established for the immigrants with financial assistance from American Jewry.

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According to correspondents writing in *The Jewish Chronicle* of 10 January and 28 February 1964, the Jewish population of China is now reduced to a few hundred souls. In 1936 there were 13 Jewish newspapers published in the country, and the number of Jews was said to be about 50,000. Shanghai was the main centre of Jewry in China.

Since 1946 JOINT alone has helped more than 20,000 Jews to emigrate. The once prosperous community of Harbin, in Manchuria, used to boast 10,000 members; in December 1963 (according to an old couple who had lived in Harbin for 42 years and went in that month to settle in Israel) there were only 13 Jews left in Harbin.

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